

WATER NOTES

Water Notes is published periodically by the HUNGRY HORSE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT as their official newsletter.

"To provide and protect the highest quality and quantity of water and dependable service at the most reasonable cost to our consumers."

ISSUE NO. 2 ♡ June 18, 2022

NEWS AND NOTES

IT HAS BEEN a grueling and onerous task to serve our Water District this past year, but the almost all new five member Board of Directors rose to the occasion and accomplished much.

We have exciting news to share since our first newsletter a year ago and have continued to work hard to reduce spending, streamline operations and reduce our rates.

Our website, www.hungryhorsewater.com, is now in place with options for credit card and ACH bill payments. We'd love your feedback about the site and its usability.

You may remember from our last newsletter that we have paid off one of our three USDA Rural Development loans. This year we made an additional lump-sum payment on one of the two remaining loans that are scheduled to mature in 2047, shortening the term and thereby **saving money**. Unfortunately, the DNRC refinance has been a no-go so far.

By qualifying for grant monies to help with the purchase and installation of our new telemetry control system and the cost of insulating our three well houses, and by cutting other costs, we will be able to provide for future potential emergency expenses, thus strengthening our overall financial position and perhaps future rate cuts as well.

Although the new telemetry system was an expensive investment, the old system was failing and would occasionally cause the tower to overflow, wasting our precious resource! By replacing it, we not only cut our costs with Flathead Electric (and should receive a rebate), but our pumps will also consume less electricity in the future. Additionally, the District has authorized Centurylink to completely remove the service that the old system relied on for internal

communication for additional savings. The end result is a reliable new system with a reasonably priced annual service fee.

Another expense we incurred this year was to purchase our own billing and bookkeeping software and billing printer. These assets now belong to our District and we are not reliant on another district's assets.

Did you notice the base water **service rate reduction** starting with your February bill? This was the first of several steps to pass savings on to our customers.

Other good news is that the **US Forest Service settled out of court** with our District and we retained our Sand Creek water right for future use by the District. In a world where water rights can be limited by any number of outside influences, this is a very important settlement and resource for us to retain.

Hungry Horse is surrounded by abundant water resources and our District has been able to keep our system water loss below the industry average. Thank you for your assistance in promptly reporting and repairing any leaks on your side of the water meter. As a reminder, although these leaks are the customer's responsibility, our operator will gladly help you determine if there is a leak, how extensive it could be, and provide advice on options available to you to take care of it.

Your District is able to provide a high quality and quantity of water with little impact on the environment to all of our customers. If you would like to know more ways to cut your water usage (and bill), please visit our website or contact our operator for suggestions. Also, we now have a new bookkeeper, but we lost our secretary so our GMO and new bookkeeper are attempting to share those duties to help control costs. We highly value our competent staff! Without them,

our District could not run. Thank you!

On the Board side of operations, our District now has its first official set of Bylaws. Our team, along with legal input, has worked hard to complete these so if anyone is interested in serving on the Board, give us a call and the Bylaws will help you understand the basic processes involved.

An ongoing project in this area is to further review and/or update our Rules and Regulations and finish organizing the file room. We encourage any suggestions you may have.

Other goals in the coming year include an operations manual and employee handbook. We also discussed having an audit of the books sometime in the near future as the last audit was over ten years ago. We will be taking a look at our rate structure again to see if other changes we have been considering can be made there.

Our gratitude to a local resident accountant for offering her services to help us with our books!



A BIG THANK YOU! TO OUR CUSTOMERS for your support as we move forward with our efforts to fulfill our mission statement.

We invite you to contact any of us with your questions or concerns. If you have professional skills you can offer the District which may help us cut our expenses, we would be grateful to visit with you about that.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS are at 6:00 pm every third Thursday of the month at the District Office on the Lower Dam Road/Colorado Blvd, the first right after the 4-way stop. We also post meeting notices at the post office. Public participation is encouraged and welcome!

FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

Ben Shafer, GM/O

WE ARE PLEASED to introduce two new employees. **Cassie Ferguson** is our new bookkeeper, and **Steve Kvapil** our newest operator. Both are already proving to be valuable assets to the District.

Our operators need access to your water meter all year. Please be mindful of its location, including where you decide to pile your snow. If we can't read your meter, we can't help alert you to any possible leaks.

Starting in June, the District will once again be conducting lead and copper testing. This is a measure of how much lead and/or copper is in the plumbing of individual houses. Should you volunteer to participate, we will share your results with you for free. We are looking for houses built or plumbed prior to 1983 who have copper service lines. If ten volunteers meeting that criteria cannot be found, we will also accept houses with galvanized steel lines. Feel free to contact me at the number below for more details.



HUNGRY HORSE COUNTY WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

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